

**1. How important should diversity, equity, and inclusion be at Harvard, and what strategies should the University pursue to address these goals? How would you work to advance Ethnic Studies at Harvard, including the establishment of a concentration and department? In addition, please discuss other specific programs and policies, especially the 1650 Charter's pledge to facilitate education of American Indian youth.**

Harvard's commitment to truth, excellence, and opportunity rests on two core ideals: academic freedom and inclusion and belonging. Diversity provides the opportunity to learn from others by exposing ourselves to ideas, and perspectives outside of our own. Academic freedom provides the full exchange of ideas that permits an institution's diversity to produce new knowledge, new insights, on the assumption that all perspectives are considered and valued. Harvard has a unique opportunity to continue protecting its core ideals while advancing knowledge, educating global leaders, and serving society on a worldwide scale. For example, while Harvard enrolls more than 7,000 international students and counts over 78,000 international alumni, representation of international perspectives in senior governance remains limited (the Board of Overseers has currently only 1 international member). At a moment of geopolitical fragmentation, it is increasingly important to have international alums express their perspectives. They are among Harvard's most effective ambassadors, connectors, and interpreters across global contexts.

Ethnic Studies brings together history, sociology, law, literature, political theory, and cultural analysis to examine how race, ethnicity, migration, and power shape institutions and identities. Establishing a concentration and, ultimately, a department would signal that these questions are central to understanding American society and global modernity.

The 1650 Charter's pledge to facilitate the education of American Indian youth carries historical weight and is one of the foundational commitments of the institution. I think Harvard should continue honoring that pledge today in compliance with the initial commitment, including but not limited to, recruitment and financial support of Native students.

**2. Given the Supreme Court's ruling against race-conscious admissions, the federal government's hostility to efforts to promote diversity, equity and inclusion, and Harvard's dismantling of diversity centers, what measures should the University adopt to promote student-body diversity along multiple dimensions, including racial diversity?**

When I arrived at Cambridge to attend my LL.M. from Sicily, it was clear to me that, until then, I was just a small piece of a globally diverse puzzle. During my LL.M. program, I had the unparalleled privilege to learn from, and to share with, almost 200 talented

students coming from over 70 countries around the world: everyone with a different background, viewpoints, perspectives, personal stories, different races, religion, culture, genders, socioeconomic status, and scholarly methodology. I had never felt such a powerful and enriching diversity of backgrounds and such a deep sense of belonging and inclusion to a diversified “puzzle” of extraordinary people. Given my personal experience, I do hope Harvard’s admission process will continue to uphold the value of a diverse student body. It seems to me that the Court’s decision changed the legal framework but did not erase Harvard’s holistic admission process that evaluates each applicant individually and values a wide range of different experiences, perspectives, talents, and academic merits.

**3. Do you support the elimination of admissions preferences for (A) recruited athletes, (B) children of donors, and (C) children of alumni (legacy)? Please address all three categories. Please comment on Harvard College’s [newly-implemented alumni interview policy](#) that requires alumni interviewers to erase all references to an applicant’s race, ethnicity, or national origin in their interview reports.**

I prefer to answer by providing a brief description of my origin that has shaped my principles, values, and views.

I grew up in a marginalized area in Sicily from parents who never received any education. I always felt underprivileged, a son of a ‘minor god.’ In Sicily, family connections, the occupation of your parents, and the financial means of your family truly matter and crucially shape your professional and personal future. At that time, 20 out of 23 assistant professors at my law school were professors’ children, showing very little opportunities for first-generation assistant professors (I was one of the other 3 assistant professors). I spent the first part of my life deeply believing that everyone needs to have a chance, regardless of who their parents are, regardless of their family’s financial situation, regardless of connections. I come from nothing; Harvard gave me everything. Not only did Harvard open doors to an international corporate lawyer career, but more importantly, let me believe that meritocracy and equality of opportunities should be a bearing pillar of our society. As an alum and Overseer, if elected, I would like to contribute to Harvard to rest on excellence, merit, integrity, and continue opening doors to candidates based on individual merit, potential, and contribution.

As to the second part of the question, Harvard should reevaluate this policy with clear guidance from admissions law experts to ensure that interview reports capture relevant context in a way that is both legally compliant and educationally responsible. Applications are meant to reflect and express, as accurate as possible, the personality, life experiences, community engagement, of the candidates, including components related to race, ethnicity and national origin, and, at the same time, the academic merit, and the potential to achieve and contribute to the academic excellence which is at the core of Harvard’s identity.

**4. How do you think Harvard can uphold the ideal of academic integrity free of political biases, contrary to pressures from the federal government and certain stakeholders, including protecting the right to protest?**

Universities are the quintessential engine for shaping the future of our society, providing tools to have an impact on a large scale. As for everything else, universities are not impeccable but nevertheless, their independence, autonomy to elaborate and implement the best education possible for their students cannot be limited or influenced by any external constituencies. Harvard has a unique opportunity to continue protecting its core ideals through advancing knowledge, educating global leaders, sustaining inclusiveness independently from any external pressure. Harvard remains, and needs to continue being, a trusted global institution precisely because it is independent of any single agenda.

Over the past year, life at Harvard has been shaped by a more complex and unsettled campus climate. At the same time, such challenges have created meaningful opportunities for encouraging renewed commitment to productive and respectful dialogue, and a deeper preparation of students to engage with complexity, to “agree in disagreeing”, and civic responsibility. I do believe that the right to peaceful protest is an essential part of democracy. Viewpoint diversity is a strength that has to be protected and respected. Even when students disagree with outcomes, they deserve a university governed with respect for their voices. On the other hand, any protest should not degenerate in any form of violence, disrespect, harassment or aggressivity. Harvard has a responsibility to ensure safety, continuity of academic life, and respect for others’ rights. University has the job of finding the tools to bring together the principle of academic freedom with a culture of mutual respect.

**5. What concrete steps have you taken to bring diversity and inclusion to Harvard, to your workplace, and/or to other organizations? Are you a member of any of the signing groups below?**

As Managing Partner of the New York Office and Head of the International practice at Chiomenti, I have been one of the most committed promoters and supporters of several initiatives taken by my firm. Since 2015, and with the launch of the *WeCare* program in 2019, I and the strategic committee have progressively incorporated DEI and ESG principles into our firm governance, culture and operational practices, translating values into policies, processes and measurable outcomes. Such commitment is reflected in tangible progress on gender balance and inclusive leadership. Just a few weeks ago, five new women partners (out of a total of six partners) were appointed. The firm actively supports Milan Pride and Rome Pride, inviting all professionals to join the Chiomenti delegation which actively participates in the parades. Chiomenti’s long term commitment to DEI is acknowledged by external certifications such as Great Place to

Work® Certification and Gender Equality Certification and is fully aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As President of the HLSANYC, together with other members of the Board, I have organized several events promoting diversity and inclusion such as: “Unique Perspectives of HLS Women in Startups”, “LGBTQ Rights in Uncertain Times: Defending Gains and Moving Forward”, “The Relationship between Activism, Organizing and Legal Advocacy in Securing LGBTQ Rights”, “Estate Planning and the LGBTQ+ Community”, “Parental Recognition for LGBTQ+ Parents”, “The Legal Future of DEI Initiatives”, “HLS Black Alumnae High Tea”.

In addition, in my past roles of President of the global HLSA, and HAA Board director, I have been involved in many initiatives focusing on Diversity and Inclusion. I have been the mentor of Asian and African LLMS students guiding them on different professional perspectives and facilitating the comprehension of the legal market in New York. Last year I was an honorary member of the Committee for the Celebration of Black Alumni, and I attended the three days program together with over 900 alumni.

I believe the Overseers are at their best when they actively listen to and learn from the full range of Harvard’s communities. I am not a member of any of the signing groups below but, if elected, I would view engagement with alumni affinity groups as an essential part of responsible oversight, especially when it comes to issues of belonging, representation, and institutional accountability.